

Speak now 3a

1: Pancake Day (speak now 3a/ lecture and writing 1)

- **Read this text and prepare yourself for class lecture**
- **It is necessary to write a text possibly related to the present topic at the end of each lecture.**

Pancake Day is on a different date every year and is a celebration unique to the UK. Read the text and find out why British people celebrate with pancakes.

Do the preparation task first. Then read the article and do the exercises.

Preparation

Americans are often surprised to hear that British people have a special day in celebration of pancakes. After all, American pancakes are a typical breakfast or brunch meal. However, pancakes in the UK are much thinner than American pancakes because they don't use baking powder, so they are not fat and fluffy and, instead, are more like French crepes.

Why pancakes?

Pancake Day is actually another name for Shrove Tuesday, which takes place 40 days before Easter Sunday and marks the start of Lent. In some other countries this day is called Mardi Gras, or Fat Tuesday, because it's when people ate all the good things for the last time before starting 40 days of religious fasting for Lent. Milk, eggs and oil or butter might not seem special nowadays, but hundreds of years ago they were one of the few ways of turning a basic recipe of flour and water into something richer.

The pancake bell

As well as using all their eggs and fats before Lent, people would also go to church to confess their sins to a priest. A bell used to ring at about 11 o'clock in the morning to remind people to cook their luxury ingredients and go to confession. This bell became known as the pancake bell. In Olney in Buckinghamshire, the town celebrates with a tradition that started in 1445 when a woman heard the bell while she was making pancakes. She ran out of the house to get to church in time for confession while she was still holding the hot pan with the pancake inside. As she ran, she tossed the pancake to flip it over and over again so that it wouldn't burn. Today, in Olney and some other towns across the UK, pancake races are held, where the racers all run and toss pancakes down the street.

Pancake Day in numbers

On average, British people eat two pancakes per person on Pancake Day (though plenty of people will have three or four at least) which means 117 million pancakes will be eaten in one day. On a normal day, Brits eat 30 million eggs per day, but on Pancake Day that goes up to 52 million eggs and enough milk to fill more than 93 Olympic swimming pools. While some people might put chocolate spread or syrup on their pancakes, the most popular topping, by far, is lemon juice and sugar. But instead of the fine white sugar you put on top of cakes, British people use the same kind of sugar they put in their tea. If you want to try making British-style pancakes today, here's a simple recipe:

Recipe

To make about 12 pancakes you need:

100g plain flour
2 large eggs
300ml milk
15ml of oil, plus extra for frying
a pinch of salt

1. Put the flour, milk, oil and pinch of salt into a bowl. Whisk them together, then add the eggs and whisk again until you have a smooth liquid called batter.
2. Leave the batter to rest for 30 minutes if you have time.
3. Put a medium-size frying pan over medium heat and put a little oil in the pan.
4. When the oil is hot, pour a large spoonful of batter into the pan and move the pan so that the batter covers the bottom of the pan.
5. Cook the pancakes for one minute on each side until they are golden.
6. Serve the pancakes warm with the topping you like best.

Writing 1

- **Search about different types of cheese in Italy and discuss its history.**

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2: Carnival (speak now 3a/ lecture and writing 2)

- **Read this text and prepare yourself for class lecture**
- **It is necessary to write a text possibly related to the present topic at the end of each lecture.**

Carnival is an annual festival celebrated in many different ways in many countries around the world. Some of the world's most famous carnivals are held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, New Orleans, USA, and Venice, Italy. Find out what happens in these and one other carnival you may not have heard of.

Do the preparation task first. Then read the article and do the exercises.

Preparation

What's carnival all about?

Carnival is a festival that happens over a few days, usually just before Lent, in February or March. Because traditionally many people go on a fast during Lent, giving up meat, sugar or other foods and drink, carnival is an opportunity to enjoy these treats for the last time. It is a time to celebrate and party, with music and dancing in the streets. Some people believe that carnival is actually older than the Christian period of Lent, and that it started as the Roman festival of Saturnalia.

New Orleans

One of the most famous carnivals in the world is in New Orleans, USA. It is called Mardi Gras, which is French for 'Fat Tuesday', the day when people would traditionally eat up all the fat before starting the Lent fast. The celebration in New Orleans lasts around two weeks, with a parade every day. Groups of people, called 'krewes', dress up in special costumes and ride on decorated floats. They throw small gifts to the people watching, especially strings of beads. There are also many balls, especially masked balls. Mardi Gras is very popular with tourists, and it is estimated that well over a million people visit every year to join the celebrations.

Rio de Janeiro

The carnival in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, is considered the biggest in the world, with around two million people celebrating on the streets each day. Rio Carnival is famous for its samba music and for the amazing costumes and floats. In 1984, the government decided to give the carnival a special stadium, called the Sambadrome, where people could buy tickets to go and see the parades. However, there are still plenty of street parties and parades happening all over the city.

The parades are a kind of competition and the samba 'schools', or groups, are judged on their costumes, dancing, floats and music. Some samba schools spend millions of dollars on their

preparations, but it is estimated that carnival makes over \$40 million from ticket sales and advertising.

Venice

Carnival in Venice is a much quieter celebration, but it is still very famous, mainly for the beautiful masks that people wear. Traditionally, the masks are made and decorated by hand, with gold, jewels and feathers. There is a competition for the most beautiful mask, and there are many masked balls and other celebrations.

In St Mark's Square, there is an open-air theatre where you can watch traditional plays, and there are also classical music concerts. Because the streets are very narrow, there are candlelit parades on boats through the canals of the city. Watching all the people dressed in masks and costumes wandering through the city makes you feel as if you have stepped back in time to the 18th century.

Binche

The carnival in Binche, Belgium, is not as famous as some of the others, but it may have the longest history. It dates back to the 14th century. Up to 1,000 men and boys, called 'Gilles', dress up in masks, costumes and wooden shoes. They also wear very tall feather hats, up to 90cm tall. The Gilles dance through the streets and throw oranges at the crowd. This can sometimes cause accidents and break windows, but it is supposed to be good luck if you are hit by an orange.

All over the world, carnival is a time to celebrate and have a good time with friends and family. Have a great carnival, if you're celebrating this year!

3: Hanukkah (speak now 3a/ lecture and writing 3)

- **Read this text and prepare yourself for class lecture**
- **It is necessary to write a text possibly related to the present topic at the end of each lecture.**

Hanukkah is a Jewish festival that is celebrated for eight days, usually in December. It is also called the Festival of Lights. Find out why and learn about what people do to celebrate this special holiday.

Do the preparation task first. Then read the article and do the exercises.

Preparation

Hanukkah, or the Festival of Lights, is a Jewish celebration. Its date changes from year to year, but it always takes place either in November or December. It lasts for eight days and is celebrated by Jews around the world.

The *menorah*

The most important part of Hanukkah is the lighting of the *menorah* (a special candleholder used in Jewish ceremonies). For Hanukkah, there is a special menorah with nine candles. Eight of the candles represent the eight days of the festival. The ninth candle is used to light the other eight. On the first day, only one candle is lit, on the second day, two candles, and so on, until all the candles are lit on the last day. The candles are lit at sunset and should burn for at least half an hour. They are usually put at a door or a window so that people can see them from outside.

The history behind the festival

The festival celebrates when a group of Jews won back a temple from the Greeks in the second century BC. They made a new *menorah* to replace the one that had been broken. But when they went to light it, they could only find one small bowl of the special oil they needed. There was only enough oil to last one night but they knew it would take them eight days to prepare more. They lit the lamps with the oil on that first night, thinking it would burn for just one night. But the oil lasted for another seven nights and this event gave birth to Hanukkah, the Festival of Lights.

Special Hanukkah food

Oil is an important part of the Hanukkah celebrations and all kinds of food made with oil are eaten on the eight days. In central and eastern Europe they make *latke*, fried potato pancakes, that they eat with apple sauce or sour cream. The favourite treat in Israel is *sufganiyot*

(doughnuts filled with strawberry jam). Other popular festival foods include apple cakes and pretzels (bread made in the shape of a knot).

Celebrating with family and friends

Family and friends are very important during the festival. It's traditional to invite people to your home to have dinner and to play games together. The most traditional game is played with a *dreidel*, a wooden spinning top with four sides. There are four Hebrew letters on the four sides and, depending on which letter your top lands on, you win or lose. The game is usually played with nuts and dried fruit and sweets.

Hanukkah gifts

Lots of families give presents during the festival, especially to children. These are often games that the whole family can play together or books and other small gifts. It is also a tradition to give money to children (Hanukkah *gelt*) and to encourage them to donate some of their money to good causes.

4: Modern-day slavery (speak now 3a/ lecture and writing 4)

- **Read this text and prepare yourself for class lecture**
- **It is necessary to write a text possibly related to the present topic at the end of each lecture.**

December 2 is the United Nation's International Day for the Abolition of Slavery. Did you know that slavery still exists today and is probably much closer to you than you realize?

Blood and Earth

In his book *Blood and Earth*, Kevin Bales speaks with Ibrahim, a 23-year-old slave who has worked in a gold mine since he was nine. He is dying. His lungs are filled with liquid caused by the dust and bacteria in the mine. As their conversation ends, Ibrahim turns to Kevin Bales and says, 'I want to be remembered. When my story is written and your book is ready, will you send me a copy? I want to show it to others, to show them that I am not completely useless. I just want to show that something good can come out of my life.'

So what's the connection to you? As you read this article, you are probably using a smartphone, tablet, or laptop. Each device requires minerals – including gold. Perhaps the gold in your electronic device was mined by slaves.

Slavery today

According to the Global Slavery Index 2018, over 40 million people are victims of modern slavery and of these, 15 million are in forced marriage. Slavery involves violence, physical or psychological, and control – often in the form of threats in order to generate profit. To quote Kevin Bales, 'Slavery is when one person controls another, uses violence to maintain that control and exploits them economically.' This violence may be physical and/or psychological, and the control may be verbal threats – but at the heart of slavery is exploitation and 'ownership' of another human being for profit. Forms of modern slavery include forced labour, human trafficking, commercial sexual exploitation, domestic servitude and forced marriage.

You might be surprised to see forced marriage included above. Sadly, forced marriage involves the same lack of choice, power imbalance, coercion and labour exploitation as other forms of slavery. This also includes forced child marriage – usually of girls, of 17 years or younger.

Slavery behind closed doors

Another form of slavery is domestic servitude. Across the globe, domestic workers, mostly women, migrate abroad to support their families back home. Employment agents in their country of origin promise a generous salary and good working conditions with a caring host family. This, however, may be far from reality. Domestic workers are sometimes forced to work long hours and their passports and mobile phones are taken away. In extreme cases, behind closed doors of

private homes, they are locked up, starved, deprived of sleep and often physically and sexually abused. They are trapped, scared and unfamiliar with their new surroundings. Domestic servitude happens globally, including in the UK.

The power of consumer choice

Every item we buy has a back story. From electronics to textiles, from handmade carpets to coffee, tea and chocolate, each of these products might include child or adult slavery. Consider a product as innocent as chocolate. While the chocolate bar itself may have been produced in your country, the cocoa in the chocolate probably came from West Africa, where 60 per cent of the world's cocoa is produced. As you read this, thousands of children and adults live in slave-like conditions on cocoa farms. Unknowingly, your purchase might support slavery. However, consumer demand for ethically-sourced products and services can send a powerful message to producers. Imagine if we all refused to purchase goods that have a back story of slavery. Company sales, and therefore profits, would fall. Look around at items in your home and workplace and ask yourself the simple question, 'Where did this come from and who made it?'

Why didn't I learn about modern slavery at school?

Did you ever learn about modern slavery at school? History lessons may have included the horrific practice of slavery, however, it was probably considered something that was very much 'in the past'. But slavery still exists and it is the everyday reality for millions of people. It takes brave educators to raise awareness of the difficult, upsetting and invisible reality of modern slavery.

The good news is that thousands of individuals and anti-slavery organizations are taking action. One such organization is The NO Project, which focuses specifically on the education of youth and young adults. 'Youth are the next generation of corporate leaders, policy makers and consumers,' says the founder of The NO Project. 'How we choose to spend our money says a lot about who we are. So, the question is – who are we? And remember, another time, in another place, that enslaved human being could be you.'

Speak now 3b

1: Black Friday and Buy Nothing Day (speak now 3b/ lecture and writing 1)

- **Read this text and prepare yourself for class lecture**
- **It is necessary to write a text possibly related to the present topic at the end of each lecture.**

Every year in November, people look for bargains on Black Friday. But did you know that the same day is also Buy Nothing Day?

What is Black Friday?

Black Friday is the day after the American holiday of Thanksgiving, which is celebrated on the fourth Thursday of November. Because it is a holiday in the United States, it has long been a popular day for consumers to start shopping for Christmas. Over the last 20 years big retailers have started to offer discounts and bargains on this day, and it has become more and more popular. Last year, people in the USA spent an estimated \$54.7 billion between Black Friday and Cyber Monday (the Monday after Thanksgiving, when people often buy more online). The idea of Black Friday has also spread around the world. For example, in 2017, people in the UK spent the equivalent of \$10.3 billion, in Germany \$7.6 billion and in France \$6.2 billion.

Is Black Friday out of control?

Many of us love to get a bargain, but some feel that events like Black Friday encourage people to buy things that they don't really need and can't afford. Many people seem to completely lose control of both their spending and their tempers. It is easy to find video online of customers physically fighting each other over bargains. It is also argued that Black Friday is bad for small shopkeepers, who cannot afford to offer the kinds of price cuts that the big companies can.

What's the alternative to Black Friday?

Instead of taking the opportunity to buy as much as possible on Black Friday, you could do the opposite and buy absolutely nothing. Since 1997, Buy Nothing Day has been held on the same day as Black Friday. The rules are simple. Just don't buy anything at all for 24 hours. Many people are surprised how difficult this actually is. The aim is to make people think more about their spending and to make better decisions about what they buy and where they buy it from.

Ethical spending

As well as spending less and not buying unnecessary items, Buy Nothing Day aims to raise awareness of how to be a more ethical consumer. For example, you can avoid buying ‘fast fashion’, that is, very cheap clothes that are worn a few times before being thrown away. Or you could decide not to automatically upgrade your mobile at the end of a contract. These kinds of decisions can help to protect the environment as well as saving you money.

What else can you do on Buy Nothing Day?

Some people carry out protests at shopping centers. Others avoid the shops completely and go for a walk in nature instead. Another alternative, the Buy Nothing Coat Exchange, is an idea which is spreading. People donate winter coats throughout November and anyone who needs one can come and take one on Buy Nothing Day.

Writing 1

- Write about shopping online and traditional shopping.

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2: Thanksgiving (speak now 3b/ lecture and writing 2)

- **Read this text and prepare yourself for class lecture**
- **It is necessary to write a text possibly related to the present topic at the end of each lecture.**

Every autumn, Canadian and American families gather for a day centered on community, food and giving thanks – the day of Thanksgiving. Where did this holiday come from and how is it celebrated today?

The history of Thanksgiving

Thanksgiving combines the traditions of different groups of people. Travellers and migrants brought different religious traditions from Europe to the United States and Canada. Several celebrations are claimed as the first Thanksgiving. The best known is the celebration held by the pilgrims in what is now Plymouth, Massachusetts after their journey across the Atlantic Ocean on the famous Mayflower ship. Like the pilgrims, many groups held days of prayer, fasting or feasting to give thanks for successfully making the long boat journey. Later, settlers celebrated their successful harvest in a new land by holding feasts with their Native American neighbors. Over time, the Canadian and American traditions have become similar and developed into the modern holiday of Thanksgiving.

Thanksgiving today

In Canada, Thanksgiving is celebrated on the second Monday in October. In the United States, it is on the fourth Thursday in November. Although its origins are religious, today, Thanksgiving is a largely secular holiday. For most Americans and Canadians, it is a day for coming together with family and friends to share a large meal. It is an occasion to spend time with loved ones and express gratitude for the year that has passed. In many households there is a tradition of everyone seated at the table sharing what they are most grateful for.

Thanksgiving food

Thanksgiving is also about food. Thanksgiving dinner traditionally includes roast turkey, mashed potatoes, cranberry sauce and, for dessert, apple, pumpkin or pecan pies. Every family has its own recipes, sometimes secret recipes handed down through generations. Turkey, a bird native to North America, is the unofficial mascot of Thanksgiving, with roast turkey on the menu and turkey decorations on the wall. In the United States, a tradition of gifting turkeys to the President has more recently evolved into a humorous turkey ‘pardoning’. At this light-hearted ceremony, the President issues an official pardon for one or two turkeys, saving them from being cooked for supper.

More than food: football, parades and traffic jams!

Beyond food and gratitude, there are some unexpected sides to the American and Canadian holiday. One of these is football. This popular sport is an important part of the holiday, when families gather around to cheer on local or national teams. American football and Canadian football are both similar to rugby, played primarily not with the feet but with the hands.

Parades are another common part of the festivities. In the United States, the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade takes place in New York City on the morning of Thanksgiving. It's one of the world's largest parades and is broadcast nationwide. A similar Thanksgiving parade happens in Canada as part of the Kitchener–Waterloo Oktoberfest, a multi-day autumn festival.

Unfortunately, heavy traffic is also common at Thanksgiving. In both countries, the week of Thanksgiving is one of the most popular travel times of the year, as everyone heads home to visit their extended family. So try to avoid any road trips if you're visiting North America during this holiday!

3: Universal Children's Day (speak now 3b/ lecture and writing 3)

- **Read this text and prepare yourself for class lecture**
- **It is necessary to write a text possibly related to the present topic at the end of each lecture.**

Children all around the world need adults to help, protect and teach them. Do you know what the Rights of the Child are? Every year, 20 November is Universal Children's Day, a chance for all of us to learn how we can help the youngest, most vulnerable members of our communities.

What was your childhood like?

Childhood is a universal experience, something every adult across the world has gone through. For many, childhood is a time we are nostalgic for. It's a time of curiosity, imagination, exploration and incredible development. The fact that you are reading this article possibly means that you had a fortunate childhood that shaped you into the motivated adult you are today – here, improving your English skills. But what helped to get you this far? Who inspired you along the way? For many of us, a special adult helped us to learn and grow as children and led us to love learning. For some, it was a great teacher or wise neighbor. Others had parents, grandparents or other relatives who encouraged them to be curious and study hard. Even if your childhood wasn't easy, you probably had at least one inspirational adult in your life that encouraged you and was a role model.

What difficulties do children face?

Unfortunately, not everyone has a good childhood. Proportionately, more children live in poverty than adults. 19.5 per cent of the world's children live in extreme poverty, and even though children are only one third of the global population, they are half of the poor. Around the world, many children live without access to clean water, enough food, or decent healthcare. Others live in extremely dangerous places and some are forced to join armies to fight wars they don't understand. Over 120 million children do not attend school and even those who do are not always learning: two out of five students leave primary school not knowing how to read, write or do basic math's. Even those who may have happy memories of childhood did not necessarily have an easy life as a kid. Children are dependent on the adults in their life for support, and not all adults treat children well.

What's so special about 20 November?

Even though every day is, or at least should be, a day to nurture and celebrate children, Universal Children's Day is celebrated as a special day around the world on 20 November. In 1989 the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child – a 54-item list describing the universal rights of children – was signed. This document came out of the work of a lot of experts and

representatives from many nations who met to create a child-specific version of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights that was signed in 1948. The Convention on the Rights of the Child is the most widely and quickly signed treaty in history, meaning it was quickly adopted into the civil codes of most countries around the world.

What are human rights? And what are the rights of a child?

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights says that there are basic rights and freedoms that every human is entitled to, regardless of race, sex, language, religion, or anything else that may divide people. The Rights of the Child recognizes that people under the age of 18 have specific needs and are entitled to their own rights. There are four main principles that these rights follow: non-discrimination, the best interests of the child, the right to life, including survival and development, and the right to be heard and taken seriously. According to this, every child has the right to safety, to care, to education, to play, to rest and to know their rights!

What can we do?

The Convention on the Rights of the Child is the world's promise to children that we, the adults, will do everything in our power to protect them, to educate them, and to help them grow. Are you helping keep this promise? There is a lot to be done to make the world a safer, more supportive place for children. The good news is, you're an adult and you have the power to influence the next generation in the most wonderful way. Start by explaining the Rights of the Child to the children in your life. Let them know that they, just like all human beings, have rights. Help a child learn to love learning, so they can become a motivated adult just like you.

4: World Kindness Day (speak now 3b / lecture and writing 4)

- **Read this text and prepare yourself for class lecture**
- **It is necessary to write a text possibly related to the present topic at the end of each lecture.**

World Kindness Day is celebrated on 13 November. How can we become happier by doing kind things for others? And how can we help the world by doing kind things for ourselves?

Can you remember a time when somebody was kind to you? Perhaps a person allowed you to go in front of them in a queue. Maybe your sister phoned you to ask how your week was going. Or perhaps a stranger or a friend helped you in a much deeper way. There are a million ways to offer kindness. And at a time when the world seems to have so many problems, some people have started to take the issue of kindness very seriously indeed!

Why be kind?

Few people would disagree with the idea that a kind action is good for the soul. It is a win-win situation, leading to a sense of well-being both for the receiver of this kind gesture, as well as for the person who does the action. As a simple example, let's imagine you have a workmate who always does a very good job. How about taking a moment to mention this to them, just in conversation or perhaps by email? The effects of this will probably be quite clear: your workmate will be happy to receive some praise and, in addition, you will probably feel good about yourself for having spread a little joy.

What are 'random acts of kindness'?

Many organizations try to encourage people to do kind acts, wherever and whenever they can. The idea behind this is that it doesn't take any major plan to be kind, just a little bit of effort. Perhaps the strongest supporters of this idea are the Random Acts of Kindness (RAK) Foundation, who works with schools and companies to teach people kindness skills. They operate under the beliefs that kindness can be taught and that it is contagious. Their activities range from suggesting kind acts to allowing their website-users to become 'RAKtivists' (people who officially register themselves as activists of kindness).

How can I be kind?

Apart from using your own common sense, the RAK website suggests some more imaginative ways to show kindness. Generally, these fall into three categories. The first is interpersonal kindness. Some examples are donating old clothes to charity or writing a positive online comment about a restaurant that you like. The second is environmental kindness, which could mean simply recycling or organizing a group event to clean a local park or beach. The third

category is less obvious: personal kindness, which means treating yourself kindly. Some examples are taking a walk in nature or setting yourself an objective to complain less. The logic is that by being kind to yourself, you will automatically be kinder to the world around you.

What is World Kindness Day?

This is an annual celebration which takes place on 13 November each year. The day is marked in many countries, drawing attention to the amazing work of organizations and individuals in local communities. How do people celebrate this day? Well, by being kind ... and having lots of fun. One typical event is to use 'kindness cards'. These are small cards which you hand to somebody when you do a kind act for them – with the message that now it is the other person's turn to 'pass on' the card by doing a kind act for another person.

Most experts on kindness agree that it has a sort of ripple effect. This means that one kind action tends to lead to more and more. So don't wait for kindness to find you today, go and start a new ripple!

